

### REMARKS

Claims 11-18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 32-63 have been added and therefore are pending in the present application. Claims 32-63 are supported by claims 15-18.

It is respectfully submitted that the present amendment presents no new issues or new matter and places this case in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is requested.

#### I. The Objection to the Specification and the Title of the Invention

The Office objected to the abstract and to the title of the invention. Applicants submit that the abstract is complete and fully complies with the requirements of 37 C.F.R. 1.72. Further, the title accurately defines the claimed invention. Applicants therefore request that the objections be withdrawn.

#### II. The Rejections of Claims 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 15-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 as being indefinite. Claims 15-18 have been rewritten as claims 32-63 to address these rejections. Applicants therefore submit that these rejections have been overcome.

#### III. The Rejection of Claims 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 15-18 are rejected under the written description requirement set forth in 35 U.S.C. 112. Claims 15-18 have been rewritten as claims 32-63 to address these rejections. Applicants therefore submit that this rejection has been overcome.

#### IV. The Rejection of Claims 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Germann et al. (Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. (1986) 83:8854-8858). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Germann et al. disclose a wild-type *Neurospora crassa* laccase.

However, Germann et al. do not disclose *Myceliophthora thermophila* laccase variants, as claimed herein. Applicants therefore submit that this rejection has been overcome.

**V. The Rejection of Claims 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102( )**

Claims 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Feng et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,770,419). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Feng et al. disclose variants of a *Myceliophthora thermophila* laccase comprising a substitution in the following regions: 222-231, 308-317, 361-376, 421-433, and 497-515.

However, Feng et al. do not disclose the variants claimed herein. Applicants therefore submit that this rejection has been overcome.

**VI. The Rejection of Claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. 102**

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Aaslyng et al. (WO 97/19999). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Aaslyng et al. disclose variants of a *Myceliophthora thermophila* laccase comprising the substitution L513V.

However, Aaslyng et al. do not disclose the variants claimed herein. Applicants therefore submit that this rejection has been overcome.

**VII. The Rejection of Claims 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102**

Claims 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Pedersen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,925,554). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Pedersen et al. disclose variants of a *Myceliophthora thermophila* laccase comprising a substitution at one or more of the following positions: 136, 137, 145, 176, 254, 373, 433, 480 and 507.

However, Pedersen et al. do not disclose the variants claimed herein. Applicants therefore submit that this rejection has been overcome.

**VIII. The Rejection of Claims 15-17 under the Doctrine of Obviousness-Type Double Patenting**

Claims 15-17 are rejected under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-3 of U.S. Patent No. 5,985,818 in view of Yaver et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,008,029).

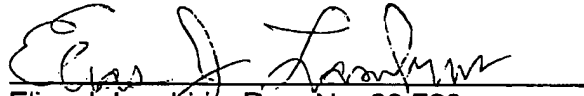
Applicants will submit a terminal disclaimer upon an indication of allowable subject matter.

**IX. Conclusion**

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance. Early action to that end is respectfully requested. The Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if there are any questions concerning this amendment or application:

Respectfully submitted,

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Elias J. Lambiris, Reg. No. 33,728  
Novozymes North America, Inc.  
500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1600  
New York, NY 10110  
(212) 840-0097